Biographer Bites Back

■ Author **Joe McGinniss**, accused of plagiarism and breaking all the rules of biography with his almost universally reviled book on **Sen. Edward Kennedy**, is on the offensive, saying he and the book are being wildly misjudged while "Teddy is getting a free ride." The author said in an interview yesterday that he is the victim of a conspiracy by the Kennedy family to destroy his book, "The Last Brother," and deflect attacks on the senator, who is portrayed as a failed member of a family that demands greatness.

He says Kennedy himself asked author **William Manchester** to complain that McGinniss had unfairly used chunks of his book about the death of **John F. Kennedy.** McGinniss denies plagiarism, although he admits he used quotes from people that appeared in other books on the Kennedys, including Manchester's, saying the use was fair, legal and credited in an author's note at the end of the book.

"It is now politically incorrect to say anything about my book, other than 'It sucks.' I feel like there is a gang [rape] going on and I am the victim," he said, adding, "I have friends in all the wrong places."

—Compiled from staff and wire reports by Michael Farquhar

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